

Speed electronic medical record adoption via key medical centers

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Persuading influential medical centers to adopt electronic medical records helps speed adoption by their neighboring hospitals, according to the Management Insights feature in the current issue of *Management Science*, a flagship journal of the Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences (INFORMS®).

"Social Contagion and Information Technology Diffusion: The Adoption of Electronic Medical Records in U.S. Hospitals" is by Corey M. Angst and Ken Kelley of the University of Notre Dame; Ritu Agarwal of the University of Maryland; and V. Sambamurthy of Michigan State University.

Management Insights, a regular feature of the journal, is a digest of important research in business, management, operations research, and management science. It appears in every issue of the monthly journal.

The call for electronic medical records extends back to the Clinton and Bush administrations. In a State of the Union Address, President George W. Bush called for broad adoption of electronic medical records by the middle of this decade. Last year, President Barack Obama signed into law HR 1, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which allocates \$19.2 billion in funding to support the adoption and use of [health information technology](#) to reduce clerical errors and costs in health care.

The authors of this study asked what mechanisms influence the swift and

successful diffusion of technological innovations at hospitals. They use a "social contagion" model to study the diffusion of [electronic medical records](#) in the population of U.S. hospitals; hospitals have mutual influence on each other for information technology adoption.

The authors look at 20 years of data from almost 4,000 U.S. hospitals and write that diffusion is accelerated if specific attention is given to increasing adoption among well-known, larger, older hospitals in densely populated geographic regions. Their insight for management is that targeting specific influential institutions for a new technology can vastly increase its rate of adoption.

Provided by Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences

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